

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/718,670

Examiner

CUONG H. NGUYEN

Applicant(s)

SUGAWARA, YOSHIHIKO

Art Unit

3661

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to an RCE filed on 11/13/06.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 8-15; they are renumbered as claims 1-8.
3. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date 11/13/06
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☐ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

CUONG H. NGUYEN
Primary Examiner
Art Unit: 3661

Status of the Claims

1. Claims 8-15 are pending, and claims 1-7 were cancelled; this Office Action is the answer to the RCE filed on 11/13/2006.

Information Disclosure Statement

2. An IDS is filed on 11/13/2006, and it is considered by the examiner.

Reasons for Allowance

3. Independent claims 8, and 15 are patentable over the closest references of Ito et al. (US Pat. 5,908,465), Minowa et al. (US 20020095255 A1), Namba (US Pat. 6,519,525), Lynn Woods "Getting there via computer – computerized mapping software...", in view of Amita et al. (US Pat. 6,622,085), because above references do not render obvious this pending invention: teaching a search area designation method used in a map search system, besides other limitations, comprising a use of:

- a search-area switching unit for switching the target search area from a first search area to a second search area associated with the search area-designating information item, when the switching determination unit determines that the search area-designating item does not identify the target search area, the second search area being chosen from the plurality of possible search areas.

Minowa et al.'s document refers to automatically "switching mode"; however, this is not about switching search areas as claimed.

Namba (US Pat. 6,519,525) discloses that "More specifically, if the map code received from mobile terminal 1 is NNNNNN09, vacancy data will not be found because no vacancy data is stored in the storage area for zone ID 09 corresponding to map code NNNNNN09. The control circuit 12 therefore resets the search zone to the zone ID of the

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eight zones adjacent to zone 09 on the north, south, east and west sides, that is, to the zone of zone ID 03, the zone of zone ID 04, the zone of zone ID 05, the zone of zone ID 08, the zone of zone ID 10, the zone of zone ID 13, the zone of zone ID 14 and the zone of zone ID 15. It repeats the process described above. It is noted that the number of adjacent zones in which the search is run can be set to a defined constant number, or to a number defined by the user.”; and “A mobile terminal user can thus obtain vacancy data for hotels located in a zone adjacent to the zone indicated by the input map code when there is no hotel in the zone indicated by the input map code and vacancy data therefor can thus not be obtained. It will also be obvious that it is not necessary to designate each zone adjacent in every direction (north, south, east and west) to the input zone as a new search zone. For example, searching could be limited to zones in a specific direction, such as east (including northeast and southeast) so that only three zones, that is, the zone of zone ID 05, the zone of zone ID 10, and the zone of zone ID 15 in this case, are set as the new search zones. It is also possible by specifying a search area to designate plural zones around a zone indicated as the search zone as the new search zones rather than searching only zones adjacent to the zone indicated as the search zone.” – in this reference, map code or map area need to be predetermined for switching.

Kuwahara et al. (U. 6,389,288) require a user’s predefined search areas.

Ito et al. (US Pat. 5,908,465) teach a navigation system includes a store which holds guidance information including building shapes. A display shows the guidance information. A guidance controller determines which information is displayed. The guidance controller sorts the information on building shapes in the store on the basis of a given condition. It also controls displayed information on the basis of the shapes. The

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controller restricts drawing of the building shapes by setting a display color to a same color as a background or by not drawing them. The drawing is restricted when the screen is scrolled. The guidance controller determines a display mode.

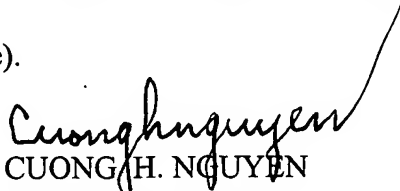
4. Claims 9-14 are allowed because they are dependent on allowable claim 8.

Conclusion

5. Claims 8-15 are patentable; claims 8-15 are renumbered as claims 1-8.
6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to CUONG H. NGUYEN whose telephone number is 571-272-6759. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:30 am - 5:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, THOMAS G. BLACK can be reached on 571-272-6956. The Rightfax number for the organization where this application is assigned is 571-273-6956.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


CUONG H. NGUYEN
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